

# THE RANDALL COUNTY NEWS.

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## CANYON CITY BIG LOSER BY FIRE

CONFLAGRATION WHICH OCCURRED AT AN EARLY HOUR TUESDAY MORNING ENTAILS LOSS OF \$15,000.

Victoria Hotel and Land Offices Burn—Insufficient Water Supply Retards Fighting of Flames—Other Buildings Escape.

Early Tuesday morning the citizens of Canyon were startled by an alarm of fire, it was soon discovered that the large three story frame building occupied by the Victoria Hotel was in the upper portion ablaze, and spread with such rapidity, that when the fire department reached the scene, their efforts were directed to saving adjoining and nearby property, which was ignited from the great heat. The recently completed new home of the First National Bank building worth \$35,000 narrowly escaped destruction, having taken fire several times. The Lair-Cowling Land Co's fine office building across the street east from the Victoria Hotel was one of the first to take fire from the hotel and was almost completely destroyed, it was on this building that the fire company did effective and heroic work, and the fires destructive work was checked on this building, as should it get past this building all of the property east and located on the north side of the square would in a short time be wiped out and the loss would be heavy. A small cottage north of the hotel was burned together with some smaller wooden sheds.

The fire ladders were handicapped for a few moments before they succeeded in getting in their work but when they did, they worked with a vengeance and the way they had the water a going was a caution, their water supply was taken from a tank near the Rogerston Hotel some 500 feet distant, which was a long lead of hose, but it saved the property and the fire company won praises from all who witnessed their work, it will be remembered this is the first large fire Canyon has ever had and was the first practical test made, and boys you did well.

At the time of the fire scarcely no wind was blowing, had a high wind been blowing at the time it would have been a difficult matter to state what the losses might have been on the north side of the square as all of the buildings are frame.

The loss is estimated at about fifteen thousand dollars with the insurance at half the amount. The burden of the loss is with J. H. Dunbar, proprietor of the Victoria Hotel who we are informed was offered \$12,000 for the property a short time ago. A brief history of the Victoria Hotel will be interesting. The building was built by our respected townsman L. G. Connor who commenced the building February 1891 and was completed, the first meal which was a free dinner was served June 20th 1891, a large number were present, but the great number was not definitely ascertained, as people failed to registered. Mr. Connor continued to manage and conduct the hotel until some time in 1893, when he rented the property to L. S. Kingsley, who continued the management for some time when he sold to J. M. VanSant and son who sold to John Hutson who sold the property to H & C Smith who became proprietors for a while when it was sold to L. T. Lester who disposed of the property to J. H. Dunbar,

who was the owner at the time of the fire April 5th. It will be remembered that Canyon is now installing a water works and when completed will be a great relief to those who are possessed of property within the business district, as water in accessible places is a source of inconvenience, for fire purposes just now.

### Condensed Facts About Halley's Comet

The comet first crossed the earth's orbit about March 10th at a point where the earth will arrive at the middle of next October but far above where the earth will be, so to speak, for it will be some 10,000,000 miles above the plane of the ecliptic. In April the comet will emerge from behind the sun, and will become visible to the naked eye in the eastern sky before sunrise.

On April 20th, when the comet will swing around the sun, it will be 57,000,000 miles away from the sun. Its velocity will be 26 miles a second. The earth travels at about 19 miles a second. On May 2nd the comet will traverse the orbit of Venus, some 6,000,000 miles above the planet. In other words an astronomer on Venus would find the comet a far more impressive spectacle than a terrestrial astronomer. As it rushes on, Halley's comet will pass between the earth and sun close to its ascending node. On May 18th the earth will be about 13,000,000 miles away from the nucleus or head, as against 5,000,000 miles in 1835. Moreover, on May 18th the earth will be developed in the comet's tail for a few hours. A few days later the comet will be visible in the western sky after sunset with a 15 deg. or 20 deg. splendor. After that it will speed away from the solar system. The last glimpse of it with the naked eye will be obtained probably at the end of June. It will not reappear for seventy-five years.

Halley's comet is noteworthy because it was the first comet for which an orbit was plotted and a time table calculated. It has a history more or less identified with history of human thought and civilization. The superstitions dread with which it was regarded in medieval and ancient times swayed many a monarch. It was instrumental in forming the policies of Louis le Debonnaire in 837. It blazed in the sky when the Turks threatened to overrun Europe in 1456 and when the Reformation was at its height in 1531. It struck terror to the Saxons under Harold in 1066, when they were conquered by William of Normandy. This fear of the middle ages was dispelled only when Halley made his great prediction in 1682 that the comet would return in 1758, a prediction which was verified after the great astronomer was in his grave.

A comet which has reappeared regularly for over two thousand years must be composed of fairly enduring stuff. Just what its composition may be, the present reappearance will for the first time enable us to tell, for in 1835 the spectroscopic was not invented, nor astronomical photography perfected.

### Tall Building for Texas

What will be the tallest building in the state of Texas and possibly the entire South will in the near future be built by Edward Rand of San Antonio on property, facing Main avenue, Huston, Soledad and Veramendi streets. The structure will be 16 stories high, of steel and concrete construction, and will be used for office purposes.

### Range Fires do Not Exterminate Fever Tick

Contrary to a widespread belief the U. S. department of Agriculture does not consider the burning over of National Forest lands as an effective means of dealing with the cattle tick and the dreaded fever which it spreads. This is set forth by Secretary Wilson in the following passages of a recent letter to Representative Floyd, of the Third Arkansas district.

"I have just received a communication from Dr. Cooper Curtice, Veterinary Inspector of the Bureau of Animal Industry of this department, setting forth certain opinions respecting the burning of forests and ranges to destroy ticks which infest cattle and transmit disease, in which the department fully concurs. Dr. Curtice has had many years experience with the department, is one of the original investigators of the fever tick, and has had more experience in this line of work than any other scientist. He has recently made a tour through northern Arkansas and investigated the conditions which exist in that locality, and his observations are therefore quite pertinent to the question of conflict in the policies of the Bureau of Animal Industry and the Forest Service. The observations of Dr. Curtice are, in effect as follows:

It is true that at certain times of the year burning the grass on an enclosed field may remove the ticks wherever the fire travels, but even then many places remain unburned and the owner depends on the fire for eradication and consequently fails. At meetings of cattle men and others I have been speaking against the practice of burning over the forest ground and have held that no work would be saved in the process of eradication because the cattle should necessarily be treated according to some one of the methods specified in Farmers' Bulletin No. 358 (Methods of Exterminating the Fever Tick), in order to secure perfect results. It is necessary to remember in this connection that there are many unburned places, especially around the dwellings, barn and other places where cattle lie.

Whenever the grass is repeatedly burned, the roots become eventually destroyed, the sweetener grasses give way to the more resistant and finally the latter perish. Not only does fire destroy the scanty sod but in removing the leaves at a protective covering the hot sun of summer is permitted to dry the soil to a crust and continues the devastation. The best grass I saw was in a place where the young growth was at least three years old. In so far as tick eradication is concerned, it seems to me an injustice that the necessities of the work should be quoted as being opposed to the needs of the Forest Service. Firing the leaves has not eradicated ticks, although followed for years. Instead of being beneficial in the forest, it has killed out the grass and even the new growth of trees, which so often furnish in spring the only source of nourishment, the buds upon which the cattle may browse while the scanty herbage grows.

I have steadily advised that pastures, meadows and growing crops be provided, upon which the cattle could be held and fed the year round, and thus the need for using the range be obviated, and the farmer by securing control of the feeding and breeding factors, be able to raise better cattle for the markets. Under present conditions the mountain farmers are sav-

ing no manure, making small crops, and are raising a very poor quality of cattle and hogs. By attending to better cultivation, diversified crops, and feeding stock on the farm, and abandoning the prejudicial burning of the woods and range, they can raise a very high quality of live stock and acquire a better money crop than they have heretofore held.

From my observations and conversations with the farmers of the Ozark Forest, on my recent trip, I am led to believe that they will take up tick eradication as soon as they can raise the necessary money. The Legislature meets in 1911 and they will then ask for a new Five-Cent District in addition to State funds.

### Building the Huge Concrete Locks at Panama

The locks at Gatun, Panama will pass vessels up or down between the level of the lake which will be formed by the great Gatun dam immediately joining the locks. The total height of 85 feet will be covered in three flights of approximately 28 feet each. In order to provide ample accommodation for future increase in traffic, and also a contingency against total disablement of the locks, they are being built in duplicate. Each lock will be 110 feet wide and will have a usual length of 1,000 feet. To provide against the carrying away of gates and the consequent rush of water out of the lake, the former will be built in duplicate, with a considerable space of water between them, so that if a ship, overrunning, should strike the first gate, the second will remain intact. Also at the entrance to the upper lock, there will be a huge swing bridge which, in the event of the gates being carried away, can be swung across the lock entrance, and a series of horizontal, vertically sliding steel gates lowered down from the bridge, thus effectually shutting off the flow of water. Heavy fender chains will also protect the gates by receiving the first shock of a collision and thus, partially if not altogether, absorbing the momentum.

But the present story is concerned with the methods which have been adopted for building this huge monolithic, or unjointed, mass of artificial masonry, into the construction of which will enter about four million cubic yards of concrete. In general, the locks may be described as consisting of a floor, 400 feet by 3,800 feet in area, and of 20 feet maximum thickness of two side walls, 50 feet in thickness at their lowest part, and of a central dividing wall, 60 feet thick. The clear height of these walls from the floor of the dock to the coping is 65 to 96 feet. The inner faces forming the sides of the lock are vertical. The outer faces are built on an incline and are stepped, the horizontal thickness increasing with the depth of water in order to resist the lateral pressures. For emptying and filling the locks a series of transverse culverts, formed in the floor, lead to large longitudinal culverts in the base of the walls and latter ranging in diameter from a minimum of 18 to maximum of 22 feet, the size varying according to the number of side culverts that are served. Now it can readily be understood that the cost of a work of this kind, involving the handling of 4,000,000 cubic yards of material, depends very largely upon the amount of labor is the principal item, and hence much thought has been given to the design of the appliances for handling the concrete and huge "forms" (temporary inclosing

walls) within which the concrete is deposited. At the Gatun locks the sand and stone are deposited from cars in a stock pile running parallel with the lock site. On either bank above the huge excavation in which the locks are being built are a series of lofty steel towers between which are strung heavy, steel cables, by which the buckets containing the materials are transported. The concrete is picked up by these cables, run over the excavation and lowered at the desired point.

The first part of the concrete work consisted in the laying of the huge slab of concrete, 392 feet wide and nearly 4,000 feet long, with a maximum thickness of 20 feet, which forms the locks. During the construction of this floor, care was taken to provide circular transverse conduits with vertical openings through the floor, which led alternately to opposite side walls, there to connect with the main longitudinal, emptying and filling conduits. The next task was to erect the side walls; and it is this interesting work which is shown so clearly in this description.—Scientific American.

### Hereford Preparing Location for Court House

The Recorder states men are busily engaged taking the foundation out from under the old court house preparatory to putting the trucks under and carting off to the lots just across the street north, recently purchased by the county from C. S. Richards. The foreman for the Falls City Construction Co., which has the contract for building the new court house, is here on the grounds and is getting everything in readiness. The county clerk's office has been moved to the county jail.

A further pursual of the plans and specifications of Hereford's \$125,000 court house, will occupy a ground space of 126.3x128.2 feet, to be excavated for a basement which will be devoted to county exhibits of all kinds, closets, toilets and other rooms for storage purposes. The county court room and offices occupy the first floor, the second floor is being devoted to the uses of the circuit court and quarter for the officers all nicely and conveniently arranged, besides a library on the third floor there will be suitable sleeping quarters for the jury, also there will be a gallery from which to view the proceedings of the court.

### An Eruption of Etna

On March 24th the Sicilian volcano Etna began to erupt. The lava united in a vast stream 24 feet high and 1,200 feet wide and at the time of going to press was threatening the destruction of Belpasso and Borello.

The lava devastated large tracts of cultivated lands, such as vineyards and orchards, and has wrought havoc in the woods. The village of Nidojo, near Nicolosi, has been covered completely, and many huts and farm houses have been destroyed.

### Entertains Merry Matrons.

Mrs. C. N. Harrison, at her beautiful home on West Cedar Street, was the hostess for the Merry Matrons' Club last Thursday afternoon.

After an interesting game of 42, delightful refreshments consisting of banana salad, sandwiches and tea were served. There was in attendance outside of the Club members, Miss Young of Mineral Wells.

O. E. Cannon spent several days transacting business at Happy the fore part of the week.

### Our Telephone Service Needs Revising

The service that the Northwest Telephone Co. is giving this locality is getting fierce, this office is paying into this corporation about three dollars a month and getting about three cents worth of service in return for their money, when it takes an hour to get a call in to Amarillo and an automobile can make the trip in forty minutes, the public can easily see where the service is. The operators in this city is all that can be desired but the Amarillo annex is where the revision is needed most, right at the door of the administration, where we might expect the best service possible under existing conditions, and what are the results of the service? It simply is nothing but an insulting reply to an urgent call, by the operator at Amarillo, a fire was raging an important message was wanting to be sent and the central operator saw to hold up the service and to such time as would suit their convenience and when that time did arrive the property was all consumed, now if this service it is very poor to say the least.

With the experience that we have of late we sometimes wonder if the central really understood their duty, and it may not be amiss if we should point some of the cardinal principals that constitute a good and efficient service. In every use of the telephone system three human factors are brought into action, one at each end, one or both anxious and probably impatient, the one at central office, as nearly a machine as possible, a supposed trained expert with at least as much intelligence and reliability as the best stenographers, typewriters. This central office factor is a personal servant for the time of the factors at the end and is entitled to the same consideration as that is given to their own personal staff.

Perfect service depends on the perfect co-ordinate action of all of these factors, any one failing, the service fails. This should not be forgotten. All attempts so far to eliminate the personal factor of the central office, to make a machine, have failed in systems of any extent. There are many times when, at the central office, action should be guided by intelligence, and it is absolutely necessary. At the central office in Amarillo this absolute necessary intelligence seemed a lost art when they refused to make the service operative, even made the abusive talk, that if we told them what we wanted to say to the party we wanted, we would have the service we paid for and not until we submitted to their request of revealing our conversation to the operator first would the service be granted, now if this is not a peculiar circumstance for the public to get into with nothing to sell but "Simply Service" it is time that their policy was revised.

### Mme. Leaves Tonight

The Yaw party, consisting of Madame Yaw, Miss Marguerite De Armond, Vere Goldwaite, and Jay Plowe will leave at 11 o'clock tonight for Pueblo, where Mme Yaw will sing tomorrow night. Mme. Yaw preferred to spend Sunday in Amarillo instead of Pueblo, hence the party did not leave last night.

An auto ride has been arranged for them this afternoon and they will spend the balance of the day in rest.—Amarillo News.

J. M. Redfearn of Plainview made a brief visit with Canyon friends between trains Monday.